

Leviticus 15-18 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Leviticus is the *religious code book* for Israel.

Because God is holy, those who are in covenant relationship with Him must be a holy people.

In Leviticus we find the words God dictated to Moses to pass on to the Jewish priests and people on what it means to be set apart to Him as a holy nation.

The first 16 chapters of Leviticus describe how the people could *approach* God.

Ch. 17 to the end of the book gives various rules of conduct *between* the people of Israel.

Outline for Leviticus

I. THE OFFERINGS

Chs 1-7

II. CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTS Chs 8-10

III. THE CLEAN & THE UNCLEAN Chs 11-15

In this section, we're dealing with practices the people needed to be on guard against lest they become *disqualified* from being able to go to the tabernacle to worship God.

This disqualification was referred to as being "*unclean*."

If you were *unclean*, it was because you had *come into contact* with something that was outside the boundaries of *ritual purity*.

It wasn't that the thing was immoral or wrong; it's just that it was something that might compete with whole-hearted devotion to and concentration on the Lord.

Some of the cleanliness regulations were for the protection of the people's health.

They weren't aware of the germs and viruses, but God was, so He gave commands that certain foods were not to be eaten, certain animals not to be touched, and diseased people were to be isolated from the community.

It's in this vein that we come to ch. 15 which deals with *bodily discharges*.

E. Purification After Bodily Secretions Ch 15

As we get now into the laws regarding bodily discharges, we need to begin with a couple remarks.

The Hebrew word translated as "discharge" is used 24 times & refers to a flow of liquid.

There are 2 categories of discharges mentioned here; **normal & abnormal** secretions.

Normal discharges have to deal with *reproduction & sex* while *abnormal* discharges are due to some *illness*.

When a man or woman is said to be "unclean" here it doesn't mean they are *morally wrong* or that they've committed some evil. It's speaking in a purely *ritualistic* fashion.

Those who are pronounced "unclean" cannot enter the sacred tabernacle grounds to engage in the worship of God.

In vs. 1-15 we have *abnormal* discharges from men.

¹And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ²“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean. ³And this shall be his

uncleanness in regard to his discharge—whether his body runs with his discharge, or his body is stopped up by his discharge, it *is* his uncleanness. ⁴Every bed is unclean on which he who has the discharge lies, and everything on which he sits shall be unclean. ⁵And whoever touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. ⁶He who sits on anything on which he who has the discharge sat shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. ⁷And he who touches the body of him who has the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. ⁸If he who has the discharge spits on him who is clean, then he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. ⁹Any saddle on which he who has the discharge rides shall be unclean. ¹⁰Whoever touches anything that was under him shall be unclean until evening. He who carries *any of* those things shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. ¹¹And whomever the one who has the discharge touches, and has not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. ¹²The vessel of earth that he who has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water. ¹³And when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in running water; then he shall be clean. ¹⁴On the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and give them to the priest. ¹⁵Then the priest shall offer them, the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD because of his discharge.

These *issues* could be anything from diarrhea to discharges caused by an infection.

Anything the afflicted man touched, sat, or spat on was unclean.

Those defiled by touching him had to wash themselves and their clothes, and they remained unclean until evening.

The reasons they remained unclean until the evening was to allow the fresh air and sunlight to have a time of sanitizing that which might carry lingering traces of contagion.

Clay vessels the afflicted touched were to be broken, wooden vessels washed.

The possibility of infection was taken very seriously. ^[1]

Note v. 11. If the afflicted person hasn't washed his hands, and he merely touches someone else, the person touched is considered contaminated and must bathe, wash his/her clothes and remain unclean until the evening.

This idea of the importance of washing the hands as a way to avoid the passing of contagion is found in the text of holy scripture, over 3000 years *before*

Dr. Ignatz Semmelweiss came upon it.
Semmelweiss was an Hungarian doctor who worked in an obstetrics ward in an Austrian hospital. [2]

At that time the mortality rate for infants was 25%, and the death rate for their mothers was about 17%.

Semmelweiss noticed that the fevers and infections that claimed the victims tended to break out in a specific row of the ward, so he traced back the factors.

In that day, dissections of those who'd died in the hospital were done in the morning by the medical students.

Next the students would enter the maternity ward and attend to the mothers who were waiting to deliver or had just delivered.

Between the dissection room and the maternity ward, all the students would do is rinse their hands to wash off the blood and guts of the morning dissections.

Semmelweiss began requiring all the students and doctors to wash their hands with special chlorine based sanitizers before examining the women and infants.

Sure enough, within a matter of weeks, the mortality & infection rates dropped to under 1%.

The director of the hospital thought Semmelweiss was a crackpot when he brought him his findings and Semmelweiss left in humiliation to work in another hospital's maternity ward.

There he implemented the same procedure of hand sanitizing and had the same dramatic results.

Still, the established medical community resisted his contention that there was some microscopic infection that was passed by contact and he ended up dying in an insane asylum, convinced he was right, and driven mad by the stupid obstinacy of those in authority.

The Jewish rabbis took the repeated rules of washing found here in Leviticus as the basis for their fastidious practice of hand-washing prior to eating a meal.

The way the rabbis washed their hands is somewhat reminiscent of the way a surgeon scrubs up for surgery.

Vs. 1-15 were for *abnormal* male discharges. Vs. 16-18 are for *normal* issues of the male.

16 If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall wash all his body in water, and be unclean until evening. **17** And any garment and any leather on which there is semen, it shall be washed with water, and be unclean until evening. **18** Also, when a woman lies with a man, and *there is an emission of semen*, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

This passage needs to be interpreted alongside other verses which speak about the sanctity of marriage & the rightness of the act of sex among a husband and wife – Hebrew 13:4 for instance, which says, literally – “Marriage is honorable by all, and marital intercourse is not defiled” or *unclean*!

Why then does God place the label of *uncleanness* on a husband & wife in their

love-making?

There are 2 reasons:

First of all, while birth itself is a marvelous gift & life is precious & sacred before the Lord, the fact of the matter is *because of the Fall*, whenever a new life is conceived – *a sinner is created!*

A new base of operations for sin & evil is hatched!

Second, in most of the religions of the ancient world, because they forsook the knowledge of God & turned to idols, they ended up worshipping out of the futility of their own creative imaginations, & man tends to be an incurably, insatiable sex-maniac!

It was inevitable that his religions would take on the sexual & perverse.

The sexual things that were done as acts of worship to pagan gods are simply unspeakable!

God wanted to disassociate *any connection of sex* to the act of worshiping Him because this would twist people's ideas about Him into a fleshly rather than spiritual vein.

Now we have instructions for the woman's menstrual cycle, a *normal* discharge.

19 *If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening.*

Don't miss that – she is set apart & no one, *specially men*, are to go near her!

[Excellent advice!]

20 *Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean. 21* *Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 22* *And whoever touches anything that she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 23* *If anything is on her bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. 24* *And if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.*

The woman who was on her period was usually confined to a special tent where she would remain sequestered for a week while she was taken care of by her daughters & any servants she might have.

Men were not permitted in this tent. It was off limits!

Really, this is marvelous! Remember that in that culture *women did most of the work* & specially *all the really hard work!*

To have an entire week off once a month would be *awesome!*

Now to the *abnormal* discharges of a woman -

25 *If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her customary impurity, or if it runs beyond her usual time of impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her customary impurity. She shall be unclean. 26* *Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed*

of her impurity; and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity. ²⁷Whoever touches those things shall be unclean; he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

²⁸But if she is cleansed of her discharge, then she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. ²⁹And on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ³⁰Then the priest shall offer the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for her before the LORD for the discharge of her uncleanness.

³¹Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that is among them. ³²This is the law for one who has a discharge, and for him who emits semen and is unclean thereby, ³³and for her who is indisposed because of her customary impurity, and for one who has a discharge, either man or woman, and for him who lies with her who is unclean.”

God is making it clear here that there is to be no blurring of the lines that mark off the difference between sex & His worship.

A man or woman must have a heart of purposefulness when he/she approaches God.

If he/she has touched anything that is a reminder or symbol of the curse & fallen humanity, then they must take steps to distance themselves from it in a practical way before they can approach God.

What are we to make of all this? What's the application in all of this for us today?

God is careful in these chapters to spell all of this out for the people of Israel

precisely because ***He wanted to be in fellowship with them.***

He didn't say all this to **COMPLICATE** the way to Him but to **FACILITATE** it!

All the details make it clear that God is not some deity ***we dream up*** & then design our own way to – He is ***real*** & He is ***holy!***

He's the One Who provides the way – the ***only way*** to come to Him.

But the fact is, we are all part of a ***fallen humanity***. The curse has touched us deeply.

There is none righteous, no not one! Our ways are corrupt & unclean.

Through all these regulations, God was hedging the people in, bringing them to the place where they would realize that even with their best efforts, they were still unclean & so banned from coming to Him.

Every day they ran the risk of coming into contact with something that would defile them & make them ritually impure.

A gnat that flew into their hair & died would make them unclean; but how would they even know?

That was the point! God wanted them to realize that even with their best efforts, they didn't measure up to the requirements for purity to approach Him.

For those who had a genuine heart for God, this would produce an intense yearning, a longing for a purity not their own, not a smug satisfaction with a purity of their own making.

It would move them to look for God to make them pure instead of making themselves pure.

You see, God was seeking to cultivate in the people of Israel a frame of mind that would look for salvation, not in their own works, but in the Work of Another, a Substitute who would come to do for them what they could not do for themselves.

As Galatians 3:24 says –

The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

He would come to create a *new humanity*, one rescued & restored from the Fall & Curse. One over which the defilement of sin had no power.

2 Corinthians 5:17 • Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

IV. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT Ch 16

Ch. 16 deals with the highest and most important day in the Jewish religious calendar – Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the LORD, and died;

We read about this in ch. 10 when Nadab & Abihu sought to turn some of the attention and glory that was going to God onto themselves.

They sought to enter into the holy place of the tabernacle & offer incense on the golden altar. But fire came out from the presence of the Lord atop the ark and fried them on the spot.

2 and the LORD said to Moses: “Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.

God’s presence in the camp of Israel was manifested in the form of a bright cloud of light known as the Shekinah.

This cloud rested on top of the mercy seat, which was the lid to the ark of the covenant inside the holy of holies.

God told Moses & Aaron that they couldn’t enter into the holy of holies any old time they wanted – their access would be limited to just once a year.

3 “Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place:

When Aaron did enter, he was to come with these sacrifices and preparation . . .

with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering. 4 He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water, and put them on. 5 And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats

as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering.

Aaron was to wash himself at the bronze laver outside the entrance to the inner sanctuary, don the linen clothes that were made for the high priest, and then bring the animals mentioned in v. 3 as sacrifices for himself.

Once they were offered, then he was to bring the animals mentioned in v. 5 as the sacrifices for the entire nation.

6“Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which *is* for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house. ⁷He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ⁸Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. ⁹And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD’s lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering.

¹⁰But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, *and* to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.

In the offering for the people, 2 goats were brought and lots were cast for them.

One was to be offered as the sin, the other was released into the wilderness as a way to picture for the nation that God had removed their sins from them in the sacrifice of the sin offering.

11“And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which *is* for himself. ¹²Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring *it* inside the veil.

While the blood was to be collected from the bull, Aaron was to take an incense censer with live coals from the altar in it & a handful of incense in his other hand.

Then he was to enter into the holy of holies, place the censer on the ground just inside the veil, and put the incense on it.

13And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that *is* on the Testimony, lest he die.

The incense smoke was a symbol of prayer; of worship & intercession which rises up before the Lord in a sweet scent.

The idea is that there is no access to God apart from someone interceding for us.

Hebrews 7:25 says of Jesus as our undying high priest,

Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

14He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle *it* with his finger on the mercy seat on the east *side*; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

After depositing the incense censer, the high priest would collect the blood of the bull and re-enter the Holy of holies where he would dip his finger in the blood and drip one drop onto the top of the mercy seat, close to the eastern edge, that is, the side facing him.

Then he would drop 7 drops of the bull's blood onto the front side of the ark.

15“Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which *is* for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. **16**So he shall make atonement for the Holy *Place*, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

As he had done with the bull which was for himself, that he might officiate on behalf of the people, the high priest would do the same with the goat which was the sacrifice for the entire nation.

17There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy *Place*, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel.

On the Day of Atonement, there was to be no other religious service or activity going on.

Everyone, including all the other priests, were to stand by watching from a distance.

18And he shall go out to the altar that *is* before the LORD, and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. **19**Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and consecrate it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

This was the altar of burnt offering in the courtyard; it too was to be covered by the blood of the Day of Atonement sacrifices, making atonement for it for the next year, when the sacrifices would have to be renewed once more.

20“And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy *Place*, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat.

21Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send *it* away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. **22**The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.

This was the scapegoat. The high priest placed his hands on its head and then prayed a list of sins as the Spirit moved him with conviction.

This was a symbolic transfer of the guilt of the sin onto the goat, which was

then taken to the edge of the camp by a selected attendant, and released. The goat would then wander away, off into the wilderness, symbolic of God's having removed the sins & guilt of the people from them.

The problem with the Day of Atonement is that it had to be *renewed each year*. Is the sacrifice of an animal could have truly atoned for sin, then it would only need to have been offered once.

The fact that this was an annual observance and one that the people looked to with great anxiety, was proof that it was only temporary and imperfect. Hebrews 10 makes it clear when referring to the Day of Atonement, the writer says,

¹For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. ²For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. ³But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. ⁴For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take [carry] away sins.

Note how the writer begins in v. 1 “**the law, having a shadow of the good things to come.**” That good thing was the perfect work of Jesus Christ. He is the light the law is but a shadow of.

In 1 John 3:5 we read,

And you know that He was manifested to take away [to carry off & send away] our sins, and in Him there is no sin.

²³“Then Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of meeting, shall take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the Holy Place, and shall leave them there. ²⁴And he shall wash his body with water in a holy place, put on his garments, come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people.

Besides the bull for himself and the goat for the people, Aaron was to also bring 2 rams as burnt offerings, 1 for himself and 1 for the nation.

²⁵The fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar. ²⁶And he who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. ²⁷The bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be carried outside the camp. And they shall burn in the fire their skins, their flesh, and their offal. ²⁸Then he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.

The only part of the animals used in providing the blood for the ark and altar that was offered on the altar was the fat. The rest of the bull and goat were carried outside the camp where they were burnt.

Since these sacrifices were symbolic of Christ, it's fitting their blood was carried into the very presence of God to make atonement, but that their bodies were offered up outside the camp, for that is where Jesus was crucified, outside the walls of the holy city of Jerusalem.

How does their fat being offered up on the altar speak of Christ?

Remember, in the Jewish mind, the fat was the best and most pleasing part of the meat. That's why the fat of the sacrifices always belonged to God.

The fat of the atonement sacrifices was offered up as symbolic of Jesus' offering of Himself being well-pleasing to the Lord.

Though by man, Christ was despised, and so executed outside the city, in God's esteem, His sacrifice was perfect & received.

The Day of Atonement wasn't just something that the high priest did alone. The people had a part to play as well.

Theirs was to make sure that as the priest was doing his thing, they were spiritually in tune with it.

29“*This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you.* **30**For on that day *the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.* **31***It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever.*

This was to be an added Sabbath day in which no work was to be done.

Rather, the people were to fast from sundown to sundown and to spend the time in quiet meditation on just how serious they'd been over the last year in their pursuit of God.

They were to take a moral inventory of their lives and realize that their sins were costing some innocent victims their lives.

Once the sacrifices were made and the scapegoat had disappeared into the wilderness, they were to rejoice in the goodness of God's merciful and gracious forgiveness.

The whole goal was to move them to hate sin, realize its dire consequences, and the blessedness of standing forgiven and clean before their holy God.

32And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father's place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; **33**then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. **34**This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.” And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

V. LAWS CONCERNING SACRIFICE Ch 17

1And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, **2**“Speak to Aaron, to his

sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘This *is* the thing which the LORD has commanded, saying: ³“Whatever man of the house of Israel who kills an ox or lamb or goat in the camp, or who kills *it* outside the camp, ⁴and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting to offer an offering to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, the guilt of bloodshed shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people, ⁵to the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they offer in the open field, that they may bring them to the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to the priest, and offer them as peace offerings to the LORD. ⁶And the priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and burn the fat for a sweet aroma to the LORD. ⁷They shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons, after whom they have played the harlot. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations.”’

Until this time, when the religion of Israel became organized with a set priesthood & centralized at the tabernacle, people had made their offerings where ever they wanted. They had worshiped other gods as well.

Egypt worshipped many gods & the Jews had adopted the worship of some of the Egyptian deities.

But now that God had made Himself so manifestly clear to them and had given them the time, place and way to worship Him, no longer would any other forms of worship be acceptable or tolerated.

Friends, while Jesus Christ has fulfilled the ceremonial aspects of the Law of God so that we no longer need to offer animals in our worship of God or worry about becoming ritually unclean, that doesn’t change the *principle* God has given here – that we must come to the Lord the way *He has prescribed*.

We cannot come to Him any old way **WE** design or desire.

Many people today think that all that’s needed to be accepted by God is to be a good person & to be sincere.

In our relativistic & pluralistic age, *the chief virtues are sincerity & niceness*.

It doesn’t matter *what* you believe, just that you’re true to whatever it is & that it makes you a nice person who’s easy to get along with.

But sincerity isn’t the issue – because a person can be sincere & sincerely *wrong* at the same time.

History has proven time again that millions of people can believe something only to discover that they were wrong, dead wrong!

Sincerity is not the issue, being *right* is.

God has shown us what is right, true, & good. His name is Jesus.

⁸“Also you shall say to them: ‘Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, ⁹and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to offer it to the LORD, that man shall be cut off from among his people.’

Was God serious about where and how people were to worship? I guess so!

10 And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people.

11 For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.' **12** Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.'

The life of the body is carried in the blood. And in the Bible, blood symbolizes life.

When blood is seen outside the body where it belongs, it represents death. God is the *Author* of life and so the *Authority over it*.

Life *belongs* to Him.

The people of Israel were to give constant attention to this by making sure they thoroughly bled their meat before eating it.

It was a common practice among the pagan religions of the world to drink the blood of sacrificial victims.

They too considered the life to be in the blood, so by drinking blood, it was thought that they were infusing the life, strength, power & virtue of the sacrifice into themselves.

God forbade this – life belongs to Him!

13 "Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; **14** for *it is* the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.'

15 "And every person who eats what died *naturally* or what was torn *by beasts, whether he is* a native of your own country or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. Then he shall be clean. **16** But if he does not wash *them* or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt."

This was another practical command to keep contagion from spreading in the camp.

VI. LAWS CONCERNING PERSONAL CONDUCT Chs 18–22

Now we get several chapters that have rules of conduct among the people.

A. Laws of Sexual Purity Ch 18

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, **2** "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God. **3** According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. **4** You

shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the LORD your God. ⁵You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.

God had taken them out of bondage in Egypt and was bringing them into a glorious freedom in Canaan.

But it's a lot easier to take people out of Egypt than it is to take Egypt out of the people!

God makes it clear here – “Don't live like the Egyptians among whom you grew up.”

“Don't follow the habits & lifestyle of the Canaanites among whom I'm taking you.”

“Follow My ways and experience the fullness of life as it was meant to be.”

This is a word we need to hear tonight. I know I need to hear it and I suspect some others do as well.

The call to a separated & holy life is no less clear & urgent to us tonight than it was when God first spoke this to Moses and Moses spoke to the people.

You & I have been freed from bondage to sin in the Egypt of this world.

And now God is leading us into the blessedness of the Spirit-filled life in the midst of the Canaan of this world.

We are neither of Egypt nor Canaan; we are people of the Kingdom of God.

How can we then pattern our lives after the lifestyles of this world?

I've become increasingly distressed lately over the way the fashion industry has become the point man on the modern age's pursuit of redefining sexuality.

You may have heard the term “*metrosexual*” – the metrosexual is neither a heterosexual nor a homosexual; he/she defines their sexuality purely in terms of the moment, whoever they're with & whatever desire happens to pop up.

It's a view of sex that has little or nothing to do with anyone else, it's just a selfish pursuit of pleasure that uses others, male or female, for one's own lusts.

The current social move is to strip gender out of sex altogether & simply make everyone the same – human, w/o male-female distinctions.

The media is the primary spokesman for this movement with its blatant promotion of homosexuality, while the fashion industry is producing clothing styles that bend & tweak the whole sexual thing as far as they can.

The fashions for women, especially young women, have become downright raunchy & racy.

And much of the men's clothing has become very effeminate.

In a recent trip to the mall, I was stunned by the low-cut, cleavage-exposing, tight tops that show the tummy, & the low-slung underwear-exposing pants the girls were wearing.

In shopping for my daughter a couple weeks ago I couldn't believe the racks & racks of skimpy, short skirts & shorts that are now the fashion.

For young guys, an emerging trend is to wear girls clothes!

I have to say this to the ladies here – please, please, please dress modestly!

Don't copy the world's sick fashions.

More & more men have come to us, telling about how when they came to church they were stumbled because some woman was dressed immodestly.

[Story of one family]

Now – I know this is a touchy subject too because some here have them – but I need to say something about tattoos & body-piercings.

Will getting a tattoo send you to hell? No!

Will getting a stud through your nose condemn you to the nether regions for eternity? Of course not!

But be honest now – why would a person want a tattoo or piercing unless Egypt & Canaan said they were cool?

Does God command them? Is a tattoo or belly-button ring something God suggests? **HARDLY!**

In fact, in jump on down to 19:28 . . .

You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the LORD.

I know that I may be upsetting some people with these remarks.

If that's you, before you pass it off as just the preferences of an old fuddy-duddy, please consider this in light of what we're looking at here in Leviticus.

God told HIS PEOPLE that they were to be different from the world!

Do you cling to these things because you want to be accepted & thought cool by the world, or because you genuinely believe they're things the Lord told you to do?

6⁶None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I am the LORD.

This is a command against incest.

7⁷The nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother you shall not uncover. She is your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness. ⁸The nakedness of your father's wife you shall not uncover; it is your father's nakedness.

This refers to the case where a man loses his mother & his father marries another woman.

9⁹The nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, whether born at home or elsewhere, their nakedness you shall not uncover. ¹⁰The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for theirs is your own nakedness. ¹¹The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, begotten by your father—she is your sister—you shall not uncover her nakedness. ¹²You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister [an aunt]; she is near of kin to your father. ¹³You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is near of kin to your mother. ¹⁴You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother [an uncle]. You shall not approach

his wife; she *is* your aunt. ¹⁵You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law—she *is* your son's wife—you shall not uncover her nakedness. ¹⁶You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it *is* your brother's nakedness. ¹⁷You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter [her grandchildren], to uncover her nakedness. They *are* near of kin to her. It *is* wickedness. ¹⁸Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister, to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive.

¹⁹Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her *customary* impurity.

This is based on what we read in ch. 15. It would make both of them *ritually*, not morally, unclean.

²⁰Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to defile yourself with her.

Because of course, this would be *adultery*!

²¹And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through *the fire* to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I *am* the LORD.

Molech was one of the deities worshipped by the Canaanites.

One of the ways the people served him was by placing their infants on the red-hot arms of a statue of Molech.

²²You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It *is* an abomination.

This is a clear and simple ban on homosexuality.

²³Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It *is* perversion.

Bestiality is another perverse and forbidden practice.

²⁴Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. ²⁵For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. ²⁶You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit *any* of these abominations, *either* any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you ²⁷(for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), ²⁸lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you. ²⁹For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit *them* shall be cut off from among their people.

³⁰Therefore you shall keep My ordinance, so that *you* do not commit *any* of these abominable customs which were committed before you,

and that you do not defile yourselves by them: I am the LORD your God.”

God makes some strong comments here about the moral defilement & judgment of nations.

These verses make it clear that it's the sexual perversion of a culture that marks its demise.

When incest, homosexuality, & bestiality are accepted as viable forms of sexual expression, that means a people have reached their end & the death of their civilization is at hand.

This is proven time & again in history.

The Babylonian, Persian, Greek, & Roman civilizations all went through the cycle of beginning with strong family units and very tight sexual morals to, in the end, fragmented families & an extremely loose sexual ethic which revealed in their acceptance of perversion as a sign of their liberation & enlightenment.

As I'm sure you're aware, Roman was a cesspool of sexual perversion and debauchery.

Archaeology has found massive evidence of the kinds of sexual perversion among the Canaanites at the time of the Jewish Conquest that I simply cannot describe because it is too bizarre & disturbing.

God said for this the land would spit them out.

In Romans 1 & 2, the Apostle Paul says that the wholesale acceptance of homosexuality is a sign that a culture has given itself up to sin and utterly rejected God.

This week I got an email from Chuck Colson's ministry relating how the members of the US Congress have had hardly ANY input from their constituents on the **Federal Marriage Amendment** which would place in the Constitution the wording that marriage is between a man and woman, and no other definition can be called "marriage."

It's an attempt to make sure same-sex unions never become legal in the US. But the Senate and House are getting almost no feedback or support for the Amendment from the people.

I sent messages to both CA senators and my representative this week, asking them to actively support the Amendment.

B. Laws of Everyday Life Ch 19

¹And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

³‘Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.

Active honor and respect is to be shown to parents.

While all of us ought to live honorably, the fact is, honor isn't something *we earn; it's a debt to be paid* to those in authority over us.

God is placing a debt of honor on us toward our parents.

One of the most obvious ways the people could show their honor of God was by keeping the Sabbath.

4^cDo not turn to idols, nor make for yourselves molded gods: I am the LORD your God.

Idols were never to be made or turned to.

Notice that each of these quick injunctions end with the phrase, “I am the LORD your God.”

Yahweh was their God and they were His people – therefore they were to be different. These commands marked them out & identified them as belonging to Him.

5^cAnd if you offer a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, you shall offer it of your own free will. 6^cIt shall be eaten the same day you offer it, and on the next day. And if any remains until the third day, it shall be burned in the fire. 7^cAnd if it is eaten at all on the third day, it is an abomination. It shall not be accepted. 8^cTherefore everyone who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned the hallowed offering of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from his people.

This is a quick recap of what we find in Ch. 3.

9^cWhen you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10^cAnd you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God.

When the harvesters would go through the fields & orchards, they didn't collect all the grain or the fruit.

Some was unripe or simple speed might cause them to miss some.

Going through a second or third time to collect what had been left was called “gleaning.”

God told them not to glean or to collect from the corners of their crops.

This was left for the poor who didn't have land.

This was *ancient welfare* – but notice – it's “*workfare*,” the poor had to work to get it.

11^cYou shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.

No stealing, cheating, or lying!

12^cAnd you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

13^cYou shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning.

The common practice was to pay wages daily.

God forbade keeping someone's owed wages. There was a good chance he needed them to buy food for himself and his family.

14^cYou shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

There is to be no mistreatment, making fun of, or taking advantage of those hassled with handicaps.

15 You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.

Justice was to be blind to a person's social & economic position.

16 You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

Gossip, slander and maligning talk were banned!

17 You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.

Note this – if they had a problem with someone, they were to deal with it and seek to resolve it, not just grow bitter and hateful toward one another.

18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

19 You shall keep My statutes. You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you.

Livestock, seed, & different fabrics were not to be mixed.

This makes little sense to us because we don't come from the agricultural milieu in which this given.

One of the main superstitions in the pagan world was the belief that by combining certain things, you could magically create something better or more powerful.

This is where the various concoctions like moisture from a pig's ear, the powdered knee bone of an Abyssinian greyhound, and bat's blood would cure warts came from.

V. 19 is God's command to not ape the superstitious practices of the pagans.

They tried producing new strains of livestock by combining different herds and flocks.

They tried to produce new grains by mingling various seeds in the same field. And they tried to make special magical clothes by mixing their yarns and threads.

God is pure, and calls His people to purity as well.

If something is pure, it means it is ONE THING!

So God calls His people to be a people of ONE THING – even down to such things as their livestock, fields, and clothing.

20 Whoever lies carnally with a woman who is betrothed to a man as a concubine, and who has not at all been redeemed nor given her freedom, for this there shall be scourging; *but* they shall not be put to death, because she was not free. ²¹And he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, a ram as a trespass offering. ²²The priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering before the LORD for his sin which he has committed. And the sin which he has committed shall be forgiven

him.

Here's the sitch, a slave girl is the bound concubine of her owner.

Some other man has sex with her. She can't be held guilty because she's a slave and has no one to look out for or protect her.

So both she and the man were to be scourged for fornication.

The man is then to make the appropriate sacrifices for his sin and as would be the case, marry her.

23 When you come into the land, and have planted all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as uncircumcised. Three years it shall be as uncircumcised to you. *It shall not be eaten.* **24** But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the LORD.

25 And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit, that it may yield to you its increase: I am the LORD your God.

When they arrived in the land and planted new fruit trees, they were to leave the fruit produced for the first 4 years.

This fruit would ripen and drop to replenish the soil with important nutrients.

When done this way, delaying the harvest till the 5th year, it maximized the increase of their future crops.

26 You shall not eat *anything* with the blood, nor shall you practice divination or soothsaying. **27** You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard. **28** You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the LORD.

These were all pagan religious practices that marked them as devotees to a particular deity.

Again, this has much to say *in principle* about the whole issue of identification and who or what our heart is longing for.

29 Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry, and the land become full of wickedness.

Some men, in their greed for riches would use their own daughters to seduce men into paid sex.

That is forbidden outright. But there is a deeper principle here too.

The role of a father in the life of his daughter is crucial, specially as she enters puberty and the teen years.

His tender attention to her, making her know she is loved and thought of as special by him is the single biggest factor arming her to resist the unholy advances of predatory men.

Studies have shown that young women who felt unloved by their fathers have a much higher occurrence of sexual promiscuity as they try to find some other man to love them.

Dads, a daughter can be prostituted in more ways than just pimping her.

A young woman can be turned into a sexually promiscuous female simply because her father was a selfish bore!

Dads have a solemn duty to raise their sons & daughters for the Lord.

30. You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD.

31. Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.

Seances, Oija boards, Palm readers, anything that trucks with the spirit world is off-limits.

32. You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD.

God's people ought to show respect and reverence for the elderly!

Parents, one of the way we can teach this to young children is by cautioning them to show restraint when they are around the elderly.

One of the most effective ways to do this is to teach them to not run about when at church or at functions that are crowded with people.

33. And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. ³⁴The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

Get this – people who are different – different nationality, different races, are to be treated as EQUALS!

God forbade racism in the law or ancient Israel.

This was simply unheard of in the ancient world!

35. You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. ³⁶You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

There was to be no professional shenanigans in business.

Integrity was to mark all their dealings both at home and in public & business life.

37. Therefore you shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them: I am the LORD.”

[1] Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1994). *Be holy*. "Becoming 'set apart' for God"--Cover.; "An Old Testament study--Leviticus"--Cover. (Le 15:1). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

[2] http://36.1911encyclopedia.org/S/SE/SEMMELWEISS_IGNATZ_PHILIPP.htm